

# “Appeal”

## Association of German Dance Archives

In spring 2007, five prominent institutions dedicated to the documentation of the legacy of dance, movement and choreography have joined together on initiative of Tanzplan Deutschland to define mutual concerns and articulate shared demands. In view of the partly acute threat to their existence, the members have formulated the following “appeal”.

As a valuable part of German cultural history, dance has made important contributions to the development of the arts and sciences since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Through expressionist dance, Laban notation and Tanztheater (dance theatre), Germany has given impulses to the modern world. This legacy continues until the present day: the development of contemporary dance over the last 25 years has been significantly influenced by choreographers from Germany.

The following five dance archives and collecting institutions in Germany have dedicated themselves to the care of this legacy. They are highly recognized institutions for the investigation and communication of all manifestations and traces of this art form and its cultural heritage:

Archive of the Academy of the Arts, Performing Arts  
Dance Archive Leipzig  
German Dance Archive Cologne  
German Dance Film Institute Bremen  
Mime Centrum Berlin

The activities of these institutions do not receive the necessary support, especially in comparison with other genres of art. It is a public task of national importance to do justice to the historical meaning of this genre and the institutions dedicated to the ongoing documentation of live art – and thereby also raise awareness for the international responsibility we have for the care of the legacy of dance in Germany. It is vital to preserve the diversity of the collections, their manifestations and histories, as embodied in the existing institutions. And it is equally vital that a joint platform for research, education and the production of art and knowledge be established.

Tanzplan Deutschland supports and moderates this process and conducts negotiations with potential partners and sponsors with the long-term goal of creating a National Information Centre for Dance in Germany, based on a strong network of regionally positioned dance institutions.

A first step in this direction is the development of a shared Internet portal. Centralized documentation of the collections, which also provides for further long-term development, will simplify the retrieval of source material. Moreover the platform plans to offer an equally concrete as well as substantial analysis of German dance history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

There are three areas, which require more extensive attention:

- The restoration and digitalization of outstanding parts of the collections
- Clarification of intellectual property rights for public use especially in the case of film and image documents
- Inquiry into the existence of further important collections in private hand or in public institutions such as TV broadcasting stations, theatres or municipal archives.

Future users of this portal are the growing number of initiatives for cultural education, students of dance, researchers and academics, journalists, as well as all, who wish to work with the diverse sources of knowledge that dance and its history offers.

Other European countries are equipped with similar information platforms. Concerted efforts are necessary to be able to provide an up-to-date and future-oriented treatment of the documents of dance and movement legacy in Germany as well.

For these reasons, the representatives of the archives mentioned here have joined together to form the **ASSOCIATION OF GERMAN DANCE ARCHIVES** and appeal to decision makers on all political levels to recognize, protect and advance in a sustainable fashion the concerns of dance with a visionary eye on national perspectives and international developments.

## **The Archives in brief**

### **1. Archive of the Academy of the Arts, Performing Arts**

The Archive of the Academy of the Arts is made up of nine departments: the Fine Arts Archive, Architecture Archive, Music Archive, Literature Archive, Performing Arts Archive, Film Archive, Historical Archive, Art Collection and Library. The beginnings of the Performing Arts Archive date back to the 1951/52. The archive gathers material in the fields of straight and music theatre, dance, cabaret as well as theatre studies and reviews. A major focus of the collection lies on the estates of academy members such as Mary Wigman, Gret Palucca, Tatjana Gsovsky, Gert Reinholm and Reinhild Hoffmann.

Governing Body: Federal Republic of Germany

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### **2. Dance Archive Leipzig**

Founded in 1957 by Kurt Petermann as a collection of traditional folklore and incorporated into the GDR Archive of the Arts in 1977, the Dance Archive Leipzig e.V. has expanded to become a centre of documentation for all areas of dance. Today its aims to provide documentation as well as research facilities for dance and movement cultures and bring together academics, practitioners and the general public as a place for exchange and discussion.

Governing Body: Association Dance Archive Leipzig e. V.

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### **3. German Dance Archive Cologne**

The collection, originally started in 1948 by Kurt Peters, was acquired by the SK Cultural Foundation of the Stadtparkasse Cologne and made available to the general public as an centre for information, documentation and research in cooperation with the City of Cologne. Aside from the preservation of dance material (including numerous estates of dancers, choreographers and critics) the German Dance Archive Cologne has dedicated itself increasingly to the academic appraisal and presentation of these documents in publications and exhibits – internationally as well as in their own dance museum.

Governing Body: SK Cultural Foundation, City of Cologne

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### **4. German Dance Film Institute Bremen**

Founded in 1988 as a non-profit organization, the German Dance Film Institute Bremen supports the work of choreographers, dance companies, theatres, specialized journalists and TV broadcasting stations. The Institute film professional TV quality documentation material on numerous current dance productions every year and edits these into TV formats and film editions on Dance in Germany, which are shown all over the world in cooperation with the Goethe Institute. Video installations as well as intranet and multimedia projects complete the program of the Institute.

Governing Body: German Dance Film Institute Bremen e. V.

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### **5. Mime Centrum Berlin**

Founded in 1990, this centre for research, information and documentation aims to develop a public media library for dance and theatre. Its main focus thereby is on contemporary dance. Since 1995, the Mime Centrum has continually recorded a large number of productions presented in Berlin in broadcast quality and made the material available to the choreographers for further use. The collection of the media library, which aside from the contemporary Berlin performances also include international dance as well as physical and straight theatre pieces, can be scanned online with the help of a new database. As part of

the European Information Network ENICPA, the MCB is actively involved in the creation of a Europe-wide access to the cultural memory of dance.

Governing Body (in planning): Co-operative Dance Education Centre– Pilot Project Tanzplan Berlin

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